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They are gone, those heroes of royal birth,
Who plundered no churches, and broke no trust,
'Tis weary for me to be living on the earth
When they, oh, Kincora, lie low in the dust!
Low, oh, Kincora!

Oh, never again will Princes appear,
To rival the Dalcassians of the Cleaving Swords!
I can never dream of meeting afar or anear,
In the east or the west, such heroes and lords!
Never, Kincora!

Oh, dear are the images my memory calls up
Of Brian Boru!—how he never would miss
To give me at the banquet the first bright cup!
Ah! why did he heap on me honour like this?
Why, oh, Kincora?

I am Mac Liag, and my home is on the Lake:
Thither often, to that palace whose beauty is fled,
Came Brian to ask me, and I went for his sake.
Oh, my grief! that I should live, and Brian be dead!
Dead, oh, Kincora!

M.

COLUMN FOR THE YOUNG.

BIOGRAPHY OF A MOUSE.

"BIOGRAPHY of a mouse!" cries the reader; "well, what shall we have next?—what can the writer mean by offering such nonsense for our perusal?" There is no creature, reader, however insignificant and unimportant in the great scale of creation it may appear to us, short-sighted mortals that we are, which is forgotten in the care of our own common Creator; not a sparrow falls to the ground unknown and unpermitted by Him; and whether or not you may derive interest from the biography even of a mouse, you will be able to form a better judgment after, than before, having read my paper.

The mouse belongs to the class *Mammalia*, or the animals which rear their young by suckling them; to the order *Rodentia*, or animals whose teeth are adapted for gnawing; to the genus *Mus*, or Rat kind, and the family of *Mus musculus*, or domestic mouse. The mouse is a singularly beautiful little animal, as no one who examines it attentively, and without prejudice, can fail to discover. Its little body is plump and sleek; its neck short; its head tapering and graceful; and its eyes large, prominent, and sparkling. Its manners are lively and interesting, its agility surprising, and its habits extremely cleanly. There are several varieties of this little creature, amongst which the best known is the common brown mouse of our granaries and store-rooms; the Albino, or white mouse, with red eyes; and the black and white mouse, which is more rare and very delicate. I mention these as *varieties*, for I think we may safely regard them as such, from the fact of their propagating unchanged, preserving their difference of hue to the fiftieth generation, and never accidentally occurring amongst the offspring of differently coloured parents.

It is of the white mouse that I am now about to treat, and it is an account of a tame individual of that extremely pretty variety that is designed to form the subject of my present paper.

When I was a boy of about sixteen, I got possession of a white mouse; the little creature was very wild and unsocial at first, but by dint of care and discipline I succeeded in rendering it familiar. The principal agent I employed towards effecting its domestication was a singular one, and which, though I can assure the reader its effects are speedy and certain, still remains to me inexplicable: this was, ducking in cold water; and by resorting to this simple expedient, I have since succeeded in rendering even the rat as tame and as playful as a kitten. It is out of my power to explain the manner in which *ducking* operates on the animal subjected to it, but I wish that some physiologist more experienced than I am would give his attention to the subject, and favour the public with the result of his reflections.

At the time that I obtained possession of this mouse, I was residing at Olney, in Buckinghamshire, a village which I presume my readers will recollect as connected with the names of Newton and Cowper; but shortly after having succeeded in rendering it pretty tame, circumstances required my removal to Gloucester, whither I carried my little favourite with me. During the journey I kept the mouse confined in a small wire cage; but while resting at the inn where I passed

the night, I adopted the precaution of enveloping the cage in a handkerchief, lest by some untoward circumstance its active little inmate might make its escape. Having thus, as I thought, made all safe, I retired to rest. The moment I awoke in the morning, I sprang from my bed, and went to examine the cage, when, to my infinite consternation, I found it empty! I searched the bed, the room, raised the carpet, examined every nook and corner, but all to no purpose. I dressed myself as hastily as I could, and summoning one of the waiters, an intelligent, good-natured man, I informed him of my loss, and got him to search every room in the house. His investigations, however, proved equally unavailing, and I gave my poor little pet completely up, inwardly hoping, despite of its ingratitude in leaving me, that it might meet with some agreeable mate amongst its brown congeners, and might lead a long and happy life, unchequered by the terrors of the prowling cat, and unendangered by the more insidious artifices of the fatal trap. With these reflections I was just getting into the coach which was to convey me upon my road, when a waiter came running to the door, out of breath, exclaiming, "Mr R., Mr R., I declare your little mouse is in the kitchen." Begging the coachman to wait an instant, I followed the man to the kitchen, and there, on the hob, seated contentedly in a pudding dish, and devouring its contents with considerable *gout*, was my truant protégé. Once more secured within its cage, and the latter carefully enveloped in a sheet of strong brown paper, upon my knee, I reached Gloucester.

I was here soon subjected to a similar alarm, for one morning the cage was again empty, and my efforts to discover the retreat of the wanderer unavailing as before. This time I had lost him for a week, when one night, in getting into bed, I heard a scrambling in the curtains, and on relighting my candle found the noise to have been occasioned by my mouse, who seemed equally pleased with myself at our reunion. After having thus lost and found my little friend a number of times, I gave up the idea of confining him; and, accordingly, leaving the door of his cage open, I placed it in a corner of my bedroom, and allowed him to go in and out as he pleased. Of this permission he gladly availed himself, but would regularly return to me at intervals of a week or a fortnight, and at such periods of return he was usually much thinner than ordinary; and it was pretty clear that during his visits to his brown acquaintances he fared by no means so well as he did at home.

Sometimes, when he happened to return, as he often did, in the night-time, on which occasions his general custom was to come into bed to me, I used, in order to induce him to remain with me until morning, to immerse him in a basin of water, and then let him lie in my bosom, the warmth of which, after his cold bath, commonly ensured his stay.

Frequently, while absent on one of his excursions, I would hear an unusual noise in the wainscot, as I lay in bed, of dozens of mice running backwards and forwards in all directions, and squeaking in much apparent glee. For some time I was puzzled to know whether this unusual disturbance was the result of merriment or quarrelling, and I often trembled for the safety of my pet, alone and unaided, among so many strangers. But a very interesting circumstance occurred one morning, which perfectly reassured me. It was a bright summer morning, about four o'clock, and I was lying awake, reflecting as to the propriety of turning on my pillow to take another sleep, or at once rising, and going forth to enjoy the beauties of awakening nature. While thus meditating, I heard a slight scratching in the wainscot, and looking towards the spot whence the noise proceeded, perceived the head of a mouse peering from a hole. It was instantly withdrawn, but a second was thrust forth. This latter I at once recognised as my own white friend, but so begrimed by soot and dirt that it required an experienced eye to distinguish him from his darker-coated entertainers. He emerged from the hole, and running over to his cage, entered it, and remained for a couple of seconds within it; he then returned to the wainscot, and, re-entering the hole, some scrambling and squeaking took place. A second time he came forth, and on this occasion was followed closely, to my no small astonishment, by a brown mouse, who followed him, with much apparent timidity and caution, to his box, and entered it along with him. More astonished at this singular proceeding than I can well express, I lay fixed in mute and breathless attention, to see what would follow next. In about a minute the two mice came forth from the cage, each bearing in its mouth a large piece of bread,

which they dragged towards the hole they had previously left. On arriving at it, they entered, but speedily re-appeared, having deposited their burden; and repairing once more to the cage, again loaded themselves with provision, and conveyed it away. This second time they remained within the hole for a much longer period than the first time; and when they again made their appearance, they were attended by three other mice, who, following their leaders to the cage, loaded themselves with bread as did they, and carried away their burdens to the hole. After this I saw them no more that morning, and on rising I discovered that they had carried away every particle of food that the cage contained. Nor was this an isolated instance of their white guest leading them forth to where he knew they should find provender. Day after day, whatever bread or grain I left in the cage was regularly removed, and the duration of my pet's absence was proportionately long. Wishing to learn whether hunger was the actual cause of his return, I no longer left food in his box; and in about a week afterwards, on awaking one morning, I found him sleeping upon the pillow, close to my face, having partly wormed his way under my cheek.

There was a cat in the house, an excellent mouser, and I dreaded lest she should one day meet with and destroy my poor mouse, and I accordingly used all my exertions with those in whose power it was, to obtain her dismissal. She was, however, regarded by those persons as infinitely better entitled to protection and patronage than a mouse, so I was compelled to put up with her presence. People are fond of imputing to cats a supernatural degree of sagacity: they will sometimes go so far as to pronounce them to be genuine *witches*; and really I am scarcely surprised at it, nor perhaps will the reader be, when I tell him the following anecdote.

I was one day entering my apartment, when I was filled with horror at perceiving my mouse picking up some crumbs upon the carpet, beneath the table, and the terrible cat seated upon a chair watching him with what appeared to me to be an expression of sensual anticipation and concentrated desire. Before I had time to interfere, Puss sprang from her chair, and bounded towards the mouse, who, however, far from being terrified at the approach of his natural enemy, scarcely so much as favoured her with a single look. Puss raised her paw and dealt him a gentle tap, when, judge of my astonishment if you can, the little mouse, far from running away, or betraying any marks of fear, raised himself on his legs, cocked his tail, and with a shrill and angry squeak, with which any that have kept tame mice are well acquainted, sprang at and positively *bit* the paw which had struck him. I was paralysed. I could not jump forward to the rescue. I was, as it were, petrified where I stood. But, stranger than all, the cat, instead of appearing irritated, or seeming to design mischief, merely stretched out her nose and smelt at her diminutive assailant, and then resuming her place upon the chair, purred herself to sleep. I need not say that I immediately secured the mouse within his cage. Whether the cat on this occasion knew the little animal to be a pet, and as such feared to meddle with it, or whether its boldness had disarmed her, I cannot pretend to explain: I merely state the fact; and I think the reader will allow that it is sufficiently extraordinary.

In order to guard against such a dangerous encounter for the future, I got a more secure cage made, of which the bars were so close as to preclude the possibility of egress; and singularly enough, many a morning was I amused by beholding brown mice coming from their holes in the wainscot, and approaching the cage in which their friend was kept, as if in order to condole with him on the subject of his unwonted captivity. Secure, however, as I conceived this new cage to be, my industrious pet contrived to make his escape from it, and in doing so met his death. In my room was a large bureau, with deep, old-fashioned, capacious drawers. Being obliged to go from home for a day, I put the cage containing my little friend into one of these drawers, lest any one should attempt to meddle with it during my absence. On returning, I opened the drawer, and just as I did so, heard a faint squeak, and at the same instant my poor little pet fell from the back of the drawer—lifeless. I took up his body, and, placing it in my bosom, did my best to restore it to animation. Alas! it was to no purpose. His little body had been crushed in the crevice at the back part of the drawer, through which he had been endeavouring to escape, and he was really and irrecoverably gone.

NOTE ON THE FEEDING, &c., OF WHITE MICE.—Such

of my juvenile readers as may be disposed to make a pet of one of these interesting little animals, would do well to observe the following rules:—Clean the cage out daily, and keep it dry; do not keep it in too cold a place; in winter it should be kept in a room in which there is a fire. Feed the mice on bread steeped in milk, having first squeezed the milk out, as too moist food is bad for them. Never give them cheese, as it is apt to produce fatal disorders, though the more hardy brown mice eat it with impunity. If you want to give them a treat, give them grains of wheat or barley, or if these are not to be procured, oats or rice. A little tin box of water should be constantly left in their cage, but securely fixed, so that they cannot overturn it. Let the wires be not too slight, or too long, otherwise the little animals will easily squeeze themselves between them, and let them be of iron, never of copper, as the animals are fond of nibbling at them, and the rust of the latter, or *verdigris*, would quickly poison them. White mice are to be procured at most of the bird-shops in Patrick's Close, Dublin; of the wire-workers and bird-cage makers in Edinburgh; and from all the animal fanciers in London, whose residences are to be found chiefly on the New Road and about Knightsbridge. Their prices vary from one shilling to two-and-sixpence per pair, according to their age and beauty. H. D. R.

THE PROFESSIONS.

If what are called the liberal professions could speak, they would all utter the one cry, "we are overstocked," and echo would reply "overstocked." This has long been a subject of complaint, and yet nobody seems inclined to mend the matter by making any sacrifice on his own part—just as in a crowd, to use a familiar illustration, the man who is loudest in exclaiming "dear me, what pressing and jostling people do keep here!" never thinks of lightening the pressure by withdrawing his own person from the mass. There is, however, an advantage to be derived from the utterance and reiteration of the complaint, if not by those already in the press, at least by those who are still happily clear of it.

There are many "vanities and vexations of spirit" under the sun, but this evil of professional redundancy seems to be one of very great magnitude. It involves not merely an outlay of much precious time and substance to no purpose, but in most cases unfits those who constitute the "excess" from applying themselves afterwards to other pursuits. Such persons are the primary sufferers; but the community at large participates in the loss.

It cannot but be interesting to inquire to what this tendency may be owing, and what remedy it might be useful to apply to the evil. Now, it strikes me that the great cause is the exclusive attention which people pay to the great prizes, and their total inconsideration of the number of blanks which accompany them. Life itself has been compared to a lottery; but in some departments the scheme may be so particularly bad, that it is nothing short of absolute gambling to purchase a share in it. So it is in the professions. A few arrive at great eminence, and these few excite the envy and admiration of all beholders; but they are only a few compared with the number of those who linger in the shade, and, however anxious to enjoy the sport, never once get a rap at the ball.

Again, parents are apt to look upon the mere name of a profession as a provision for their children. They calculate all the expenses of general education, professional education, and then of admission to "liberty to practise;" and finding all these items amount to a tolerably large sum, they conceive they have bestowed an ample portion on the son who has cost them "thus much monies." But unfortunately they soon learn by experience that the elevation of a profession, great as it is, does not always possess that homely recommendation of causing the "pot to boil," and that the individual for whom this costly provision has been made, cannot be so soon left to shift for himself. Here then is another cause of this evil, namely, that people do not adequately and fairly calculate the whole cost.

Of our liberal professions, the army is the only one that yields a certain income as the produce of the purchase money. But in these "piping times of peace," a private soldier in the ranks might as well attempt to verify the old song, and

"Spend half a crown out of sixpence a-day," as an ensign to pay mess-money and band-money, and all other regulation monies, keep himself in dress coat and epaulettes, and all the other *et ceteras*, upon his mere pay. The thing cannot be done. To live in any comfort in the army, a sub-